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TIGHT-LACING,  
FOUNDED ON  
PHYSIOLOGY AND PHRENOLOGY:  
OR,  
THE EVILS  
INFILCTED ON MIND AND BODY, BY  
COMPRESSING THE ORGANS OF ANIMAL LIFE,  
THEREBY RETARDING AND ENFEEBLING  
THE VITAL FUNCTIONS.

ILLUSTRATED WITH CUTS

BY O. S. FOWLER,

AUTHOR OF FOWLER'S PHRENOLOGY, HEREDITARY DESCENT, PHRENOLOGY  
APPLIED TO EDUCATION AND SELF-IMPROVEMENT, DO. TO MATRI-  
MONY, DO. TO MEMORY, TEMPERANCE, ETC.

“NATURAL WAISTS,” OR, “NO WIVES.”

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# TIGHT-LACING,

OR THE EVILS OF

## COMPRESSING THE ORGANS OF ANIMAL LIFE.

ILLUSTRATED BY CUTS.

BY O. S. FOWLER,  
PRACTICAL PHRENOLOGIST.

Editor of the American Phrenological Journal; and Author of Phrenology Proved, Illustrated  
and Applied, Fowler's Works, &c. &c.

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“Natural Waists or no Wives.”

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O. S. & L. N. FOWLER, 131 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK.

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THE self-induced evils under which mankind groan, are many and distressing. Of these, some are imposed by intemperance, and others by poverty, sickness, and the artificial state of society in which we live; but all are brought upon man *by himself*. But the great proportion of them are inflicted by the tyrant goddess FASHION; of which TIGHT LACING is one of the most painful and injurious. For the last ten years, the author has taken a bold and public stand against these evils, especially the latter. In his work on Matrimony, he censured this wicked practice in terms of unqualified disapprobation, even though fully aware that its sale would be materially injured thereby. He has since had the unspeakable satisfaction of knowing that these brief but pungent remarks, have led to the formation of *Anti-Lacing Societies*, and been a rallying point for the friends of “natural waists or no wives.” With the view of extending his usefulness in this department, and doing what he can to render a practice which is as great an evil as intemperance ever was, and greater than that vice now is, as disgraceful as it is fashionable and pernicious, he has determined to devote the following pages *exclusively* to a practical exposition of the evils of this fashion, and thereby do what he can to induce young men not to require this self-immolation at the hands of woman, and induce the latter to abandon a practice so destructive of their own happiness and so detrimental to posterity.

To render the evils of tight-lacing still more plain and forcible, cuts have been introduced, representing both the natural position and full development of the vital organs, and also their cramped state and dislocated position.

In order fully to present this whole subject, it will be necessary to point out somewhat fully the functions and uses of the principal organs of the body, but the *science* therein involved will be dwelt upon no farther than is indispensable to show how this foolish but pernicious practice destroys personal happiness, mars beauty, undermines the constitution, depresses the spirits, shortens life, and injures posterity. Do not, fair reader, discard these pages with a sneer, but *peruse attentively*, and then act as intellect and moral principle may dictate.

The human body, then, is composed of three great classes of organs, all distinct in their nature and ends, but each indispensable to happiness, and even to life. These classes of organs and their functions are sometimes called *Temperaments*, and the predominance or deficiency of either, is called the predominance or deficiency of the corresponding *Temperament*. These classes of organs or temperaments are,

1. The VITAL or NOURISHING Temperament; which embraces the heart, lungs, digestive apparatus, blood, viscera, and all the *internal* organs, analogous to those removed from animals in fitting them for the table, and contained within the thorax and abdomen. Its predominance gives a thick-set, stocky form of body, together with depth, breadth, and often roundness of shoulders, and thus a full, capacious chest; throws the arms far apart and sets them well back; gives a well-developed abdomen, large and strong lungs; great power of voice; a full, strong pulse; sound, and well set teeth; plumpness of person; a large waist; full bust, and good figure. This organization gives great strength of constitution and vigor of body; a strong hold on life; a capacity for enduring fatigue, privation, and exposure; an abundant supply of animal life and vital energy, to be expended either by the muscles in physical exertion, or by the brain and nerves, in thought or feeling; warmth and elasticity of feeling, and a hearty relish for food, sleep, and all the enjoyments of animal life. They furnish vitality. They impart that animal life, that physical vigor, required by every muscle, by every nerve, by the brain, by all portions of the body to sustain them in action. Without this vitality they die instantur. With it but sparingly supplied, the brain, the muscles droop, become inert, and die. Lascitude, general weakness, fatigue, a permanent faintness or sinking of spirit, together with this whole class of feelings, grow out of the feebleness of these organs. Many readers know by experience what a weakening influence indigestion, or extreme fatigue, or bad breath, say the feeling of suffocation produced by being in a crowded room, or a muggy atmosphere, &c., have on both the mind and the body. Being put to it for breath, or afflicted with the asthma, or troubled with palpitation of the heart, or diarrhea, or spitting of blood, or a sinking down into consumption, are all but disorders of this range of organs, and the languid faintness and feebleness occasioned thereby, will serve to illustrate both their function and the effect of their feebleness or disease.

This portion of the body not only originates vitality, but supports and sustains the whole animal economy; and constitutes the fountain-head and main source of animal power and vital energy; manufactures animal heat; resists cold and heat, disease and death; and re-supplies the brain, nerves and muscles with that vital energy which their every action compels them to expend. It is the first portion of the animal economy formed, and the means employed in manufacturing and depositing matter for the formation, growth, and nutrition of all the parts requiring either;

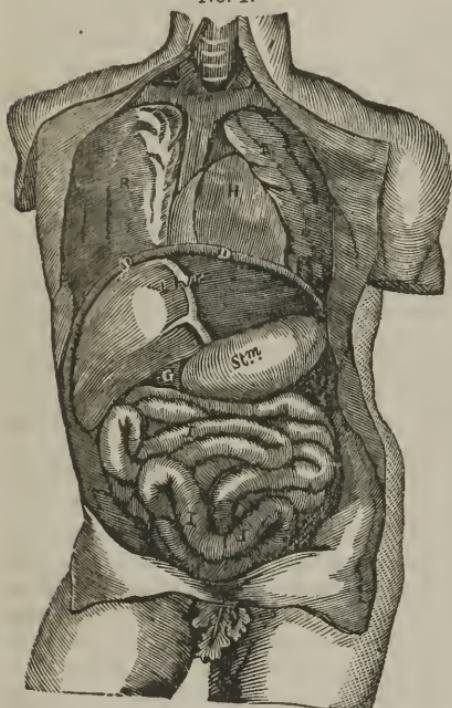
and hence, is most active in childhood and youth, when these *functions* are the most vigorous. Life is also extinguished sooner by a blow on the pit of the stomach than on any other part, the head not excepted, and the blood, instead of coagulating, remains liquid, all showing that these internal organs are the fountain and centre of animal life. All aged, all eminently talented persons will be found to possess amply developed chests; and all consumptive and short-lived families, to have narrow chests. All grand-mothers will be found to have large waists; for, without that ample stock of vitality furnished thereby, they cannot live to become grand-mothers. The chests of long-lived persons, and of hale, hearty families, will always be found to be deep, ample, and expansive; their shoulders broad, waists large, and persons stocky; but those who die young, unless of accident or some acute, inflammatory disease, as well as sickly, delicate, feeble children and invalids, will be found to be slim-built, narrow and shallow chested, small around the waist, and poorly developed in the abdomen; as are most who are afflicted with dyspepsia, liver-complaint, scrofula, weakness, palpitation of the heart, consumption, and this whole class of diseases. The *cause* of these diseases is feeble vital organs, and their *indications* are a narrow chest and small waist. Other things being the same, in proportion to the development of these vital organs, that is, to the fulness of the waist and expansion of the chest, will be the health and strength of constitution. Show me a narrow chest and small waist, and I will show you a delicate, sickly invalid; but let the heart, lungs, digestive apparatus, and circulation be vigorous, and the whole system is vigorous; the feelings buoyant and elastic; the health excellent; diseases resisted; and life prolonged. Were I to take the most effectual method I know of for undermining the health of an enemy, and making him perfectly wretched, I would *cramp his vital organs*—in other words, I would *lace* him.

Another illustration. Deprive the stomach of its required supply of food. You become weaker and fainter in mind, in body, till you die of pure inanition. And this will show both the nature and function of digestion, and the importance of a healthy stomach, as well as of furnishing the right *kind* and *quantity* of food. Another. Go without breath, or breathe impure air, or air saturated with poisonous gases, or breathe only half enough, or compress the chest, and the office of the lungs, as well as the importance of abundance of wholesome air for respiration, will become *sensibly* apparent. Or let the heart become enfeebled—its pulsations labored and inefficient, the blood unequally distributed, the hands and feet cold, but the head burning up with heat, the skin cold and clammy, the body chilly, the blood diseased—any disorder affecting the circulation, and you will have a *practical* illustration of the importance of a vigorous circulation. Let the liver, let the kidneys, let any of the internal organs be disordered, and we then *feel* the value of vitality by its scarcity.

Turn the tables. Let the muscles be powerful, so that you can turn off any quantity of work, and for year after year; or walk a great distance without fatigue; or move, labor, and do every thing with perfect ease and even pleasure. Let the lungs be large and active, so that you can drink in full and constant supplies of fresh air to invigorate the whole system and charge it with that vital electricity derived from breath. Let the heart send the blood, thus thoroughly vitalized, bounding and rushing through all parts of the system, even to the ends of the fingers

and toes, imparting health, energy, power, spontaneous action, to every muscle, nerve, the brain included. Let the digestion be perfect. Let food never trouble you. Let it fill up your person, make perfect chyle, perfect blood. Let, in short, all the vital organs be fully developed, be healthy, be vigorous, so that your supply of vitality is abundant, and a flow of healthy, happy feeling thrills throughout your whole frame. Disease keeps aloof. Distress is a total stranger. You know no pain. All you see, all you feel, all you do, but makes you *happy*,—happy beyond what words can express. Experience alone can disclose the height, the depth, the extent, the sweetness of that happiness which flows from a healthy vital apparatus.

No. 1.



ed *g.*, which is secreted by the liver, marked *Liv.*) and the other coming from the pancreas or sweet bread—the two converting it into a milky substance which contains all the properties of blood, except the oxygen received from the air. Exposed to air it turns red. As the food passes along the intestines, (those crooked folds marked *I I I.*) it is assorted, the refuse part continuing along the intestinal canal till it is rejected in the form of fæces, and the nourishing properties being taken up by the lacteals, vessels that have little mouths like, opening into them, which, uniting together, carry the nutrition along up near the back bone till it empties it into the heart, where, mixing with, it is converted into blood; and is sent by the heart, first to the lungs, to be oxygenated or charged with vitality, and then to be received back into the heart and sent round the whole system on its life-imparting mission. If the digestion be bad, this blood is of course imperfect, or perhaps loaded with disease; for

But to show the *rationale* of this whole subject still more specifically. Cut No. 1 shows the *location* of those organs individually, which, taken collectively, constitute this vital apparatus. The upper portion represents the throat, including the passage way of the food. Those lobes marked *R L* and *L L* [right lung and left lung] represent the lungs, which almost encircle the heart (*H.*) which two fill up the upper portion of the chest as far down as the diaphragm, (that rainbow-like curve, marked *D.*) below which is the stomach, (marked *Stm.*) at the upper portion of which the food enters it, and, after passing round and round till converted into chyle, it escapes at the upper part of the left hand end, through an opening called the *pyloric orifice*, into the duodenum, where it receives two secretions, the one from the gall-bladder (mark-

when food lays long in the stomach without being digested, it ferments, that is, decays or rots, and thus engenders vast quantities of corruption, which, entering the blood, carry disease to all portions of the system, escaping by slow degrees through the lungs, and by insensible perspiration. Hence the importance of having good food, and that perfectly digested; and, when digestion is imperfect, of restoring it again to powerful and healthy action.

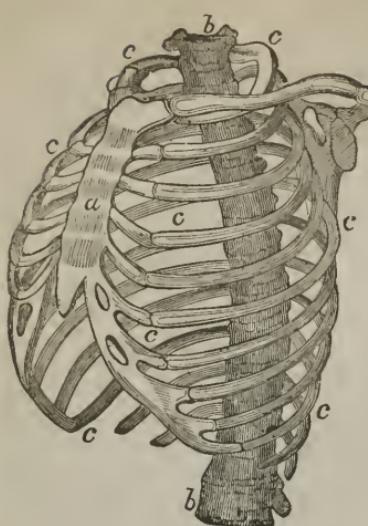
The heart, by every pulsation, propels the blood along the arteries, which continue to divide and subdivide, till they become too small to be seen by the naked eye. They can be traced into subdivisions still more minute by the aid of the microscope, but the most powerful optical instruments cannot trace them to their termination, so infinitely small and numerous are their ramifications. Indeed, the finest point that can be made cannot be inserted in the flesh without penetrating them. It is in these inconceivably small capillary vessels that the blood expends its life-giving energies. It then passes into the veins. But, by this time, it becomes charged with carbon, of which charcoal is mainly composed, which evolves so poisonous a gas when burned. This carbon it is which gives it its dark blue, leaden aspect. To carry off this carbon by respiration, is one of the offices of the lungs. When, however, respiration is imperfect, the air close, the breathing obstructed by asthma, or whalebone, or steel bars, this deadly poison, unable to escape, is compelled to return with the blood, to irritate the system, to enfeeble vitality, to destroy life.

Stop the action of the stomach by withholding nutrition, and how soon human beings die. Suspend the functions of the lungs, by withholding air, and how soon they suffocate! and just in that proportion in which *either* of these great functions is retarded, in just that proportion is life extinguished and death hastened. Tight-lacing cramps the action of both the lungs and stomach, and thereby retards both digestion and respiration, and in just that proportion deprives those who lace, of life. This point will be seen in its true light, by contrasting the engravings 1, 3 and 5, which show the natural size and position of these organs, with engravings numbered 2 and 4, which show the effects produced by compressing these points. The latter are copied from life, or rather, from a lady who killed herself by tight-lacing. They are not exaggerated; but, are so far from it, that they only represent the ribs (r. r.) as meeting, whereas they often LAP OVER, as will be seen on examining the chests of many a lady promenading our streets. Probably few females will read this who do not *know* of some female acquaintance whose ribs have been made to lap over by tight-lacing. The distance from the lower end of this lady's breast-bone to her spine, was only *one inch and three-fourths*, not a *THIRD* its usual distance.

The amount of air supposed to be breathed at each ordinary, natural inspiration is found to average about six pints; while the amount usually inspired by a *tight-laced lady*, is only about *three* pints, or a diminution of about *one half*! Of course, tight-lacers have only *half* of their natural powers of life, and are therefore only about *half* alive, the other *half* being *dead—dead while they live*, besides the shortening of their lives by hastening death.

Again. Notice the process of breathing in yourself; and when unrestrained, you will see a full, free expansion and contraction of the ribs.

No. 2.



Their expansion is seen in Cut No. 2, which represents the ribs full and natural. Lacing prevents that expansion of the chest which is natural in breathing, and by means of which alone air can be admitted into the lungs. This shows *how* it is that tight-lacing prevents breathing, and thus literally *suffocates* its fashionable victim. And I now appeal to every corseted woman, whether she does not experience a sinking faintness, a choking for want of breath, a suffocating sensation, as though she should die; a panting for breath, which, carried much farther, would destroy life on the spot. It is this which occasions so many laced women to faint at church, or on occasions where the house is full, and the air therefore less pure. They obtain but little breath at all events, and that

little being impure, they faint from mere want of it, including also that want of circulation, caused by cramping the heart and arteries. And how quick a woman comes to, when her girt-strings are cut!

Tight lacing violates another important physiological principle. Digestion is greatly facilitated by *motion* in the stomach. Indeed, without this motion, its functions soon become enfeebled, its conditions diseased, its product corrupt, and life itself consequently enfeebled, by the disease thereby engendered in the whole system. To render this motion constant, and thus perpetually to assist digestion, it is so arranged that every breath we draw presses downward upon all the organs below the lungs, and thus imparts this much needed motion to the digestive apparatus. But tight-lacing *girts* in the lower portion of the lungs, and cuts off all that downward movement naturally imparted by breathing to the organs of digestion; and confines all the motion occasioned by breathing to the upper portion of the lungs. By noticing the motion made in breathing, it is easy to see who is laced, for those who *are* laced, will heave the upper part of their chests greatly, but the entire region of the abdomen will be motionless; the consequence of which is a most fatal torpor of the whole digestive apparatus, that gradually but effectually stops the manufactory and flow of vitality at its fountain head, weakening the powers of life while we live, and bringing them the sooner to a fatal cessation.

One appeal more, and, if possible, still more cogent. It is directed to the very organ that makes our women lace—to their *vanity*. *Properly* are you called *fair*. You are called fair, beautiful, lovely, handsome, pretty, graceful, charming, &c. God has made you so. Beauty is indeed a valuable *addition* to the character of woman. Man is constituted to *love* female beauty. And whatever *adds* to your beauty, should be sedulously cultivated. Whatever *detracts* therefrom, should be entirely eschewed.

Now what effect has tight-lacing on beauty? **Most PERNICIOUS—always, necessarily.** You think it makes you handsome! But, think

you that the wasp-like waist is in itself more beautiful than the waist given by nature? Think you that girding the waist can improve the beauty of the works of *God*? How would Venus de Medicis look with

No. 3.



No. 4.



the other free, her motions natural, easy and graceful, and then tell me if a naturally full waist rendered small artificially, is not a *deformity*? /

But, this is but a small part of the reason why lacing renders a woman homely. Can a *poor, scrawny, pale-faced, spare-featured, ghastly-looking* woman, possibly be handsome? Beauty is *always* accompanied by a plump person, and a ruddy cheek. But sickness always impairs the beauty; and death, by rendering the cheeks sunken and the looks haggard, destroys true beauty. And for this reason. A full cheek and a plump person indicate *health*; and this, a full supply of that animal vigor on which life and happiness depend. Now, lacing impairs the health and diminishes the action of the lungs and stomach. This enfeeble vitality and invites death, and *thus* effaces beauty. Beauty cannot exist without health and a fresh countenance, and they cannot exist with tight lacing. Lacing diminishes both the size and the vigor of the whole vital apparatus, and this causes the cheeks to fall in. (See the principle on which this depends explained in the Phrenological Almanac for 1845 Art. 1.) But, vigor of lungs and stomach both fill out and also *reddens* the cheeks, and hence promote beauty. But tight-lacing has been shown to destroy both. One reason why marriage impairs the beauty, is because it impairs the health. But not to dwell. I take the broad ground—a ground supported by both observation and science—that *no woman having an artificial waist can be handsome*. Tight-lacing would make Venus herself homely—will make *any* woman homely, tame and uninteresting, by making her thin, spare, scrawny, and haggard in appearance. I wish this point were fully understood. It alone would break up lacing.

But this is not all, nor even the worst. Tight-lacing *diseases* the lungs, as well as retards their action. By a glance at their position, as seen in Cut No. 1, the corsets so compress their entire lower section, as almost completely to prevent action. Now who does not know that this inaction is a most powerful promoter of disease. Action is known to

a little pent up waist? As well pinch up or destroy any other portion of the system, and then call it *handsome*! Nature is always beautiful; nature *distorted*, always homely. Look at the same woman, or upon two women, alike except that the waist of the one shall be distorted and her motions cramped by corsets, and

*work off* most kinds of disease. Let a healthy man *keep still* for a few weeks, and disease gathers and deepens on him, till he is compelled either to go to work again, or else to die. The virtue of Rammagi's tube consists in its giving *exercise* to the lungs. Let those who are predisposed to consumption but *inflate* their lungs daily and hourly, by full and frequent inspirations, dilating them to their largest capacity, and besides remaining healthy, they will continually *increase* in size and strength. But, let the opposite course be pursued, and opposite results will follow. Let the lungs be cramped, and they will become diseased. The mere pressure of the corset can hardly fail to induce inflammation; and this, carried far, must end in ulceration. But, however detrimental pressure is to any part of the body, and to the lungs in particular, it is their *want of action* which is most fatal to their healthy condition. The law that governs them is, *constant* action, or else disease. Nothing is more fatal to the lungs, than that *inaction* which tight-lacing always and necessarily induces. This, and the pressing together of their pores, which free inspirations would keep apart, causes adhesions, and these, inflammation, and this, ulcerations. Scarcely any one cause of consumption is more prolific. And yet, its victims are said to die of *consumption*, when in fact they die of *lacing*. It is just as bad as though they committed suicide by *strangling* themselves. They *do* commit suicide by *strangulation*, and thus break the hearts of friends and family, and yet the real cause of their death is overlooked, or else kept studiously out of view.

The alarming prevalence of consumption within the last few years, should cause every true lover of his country to weep. It has broken the hearts of thousands of disconsolate parents, removing one by one, their fond hopes and blooming daughters, till *all* were carried to their long home, and they hastened into their graves mourning. And all because their vain but ignorant daughters *laced*. *Tight-lacing* answers the question, "Why do so many more *females* die of consumption than *males*?"

But its effects on the *stomach* (marked Stm.) are *still more cramped* in proportion, and the nourishing of the system is reduced in even a greater ratio. So that tight-lacers are not even a quarter alive, and are more than three quarters dead while alive. (How can the liver, (marked l. see engravings 3 and 4,) act when drawn down and bandaged with a strong girth around it? Not only is its action proportionably enfeebled, but the product of that action becomes corrupt, because the organ itself becomes diseased, and the stomach thereby corrupted, and the blood rendered impure.) This carries disease to every portion of the system; especially to the *brain*, because that organ receives so large a supply of blood from tight-lacing. This unfolds another cause of the diseased feelings of lacers. Lacing corrupts the blood, and this diseases the *brain*, which makes the feelings produced by the action of that brain diseased. This diseased action of the brain is usually called craziness, or insanity. How beautiful, how philosophical an exposition of the almost universal fact that those who have laced so tight as to disease the blood, are crazy. That they *are* crazy, is rendered evident by the state of mind described on p. 9, and will be rendered still more evident hereafter.

The state of mind there described is only the effect of partial insanity. That tight-lacing produces this state, first, by sending too much blood to the head; and secondly, by corrupting the blood, and

thereby diseasing the brain, is self-evident; and this principle fully establishes and clearly explains the fact that tight-lacing produces *mental derangement*.

Tight-lacing not only diseases the blood, but also retards its circulation. How can a bandaged, laboring heart give full, strong, healthy pulsations when thus cramped up and bandaged? how send the blood to the extremities, and force it through all the almost infinitely minute and ramified veins of the body? It cannot: and even if it could, the blood would be stopped in its course, especially to and from the lower limbs, so that the feet must necessarily be cold, (universally regarded as one of the most *prolific* causes of disease,) and the muscles used in walking, be enfeebled. Who ever knew tight-laced women capable of walking much? How soon do they get out of breath, (because the lungs will not admit air enough to vitalize the blood,) and become fatigued? (because these muscles used in walking, become exhausted from the absence of well arterialized blood.) No! *laced* ladies are good enough to *ride*, and that on the softest cushioned and most easy-riding carriages. Take care, driver! be careful, or you'll jolt them in two; for, such *frail* ware breaks in two *very* easily, *in the middle*.

To be productive of health, or physical or mental happiness, the circulation *must* be *uniform*; and every thing which tends either to retard the circulation as a whole, or to increase the circulation of some portions and diminish that of other portions, will be proportionally *ruinous*. Medical men have not appreciated the importance of equality, or *proportion* of circulation in the different parts. The absence of this uniformity in the circulation, is one of the main causes of disease; and restoring it, will cure most diseases. A moment's reflection and a little observation, will convince every one of the importance of this principle, and also show how *wofully* it is violated by tight-lacing.

A Philadelphia physician, in a letter to a lady on the effect of wearing corsets, has the following remarks: "I anticipated the happy period when the fairest portion of the fair creation will step forth unencumbered with slabs of walnut and tiers of whalebone. The constitution of our females must be excellent, to withstand in any tolerable degree, the inflictions of the corset, eight hours every day. No other animal could survive it. Take the honest ox, and enclose his sides with hoop-poles, put an oaken plank beneath him, and gird the whole with a bed cord, and demand of him labor. He would labor indeed, but it would be for breath."

The second great function of life affected by tight-lacing, is the *NERVOUS SYSTEM AND BRAIN*—that portion of the body called into action in the manufacture and exercise of feeling, thought, sensation—that portion of us for which all others were made, and which *lives* and *is*, and which constitutes the most exalted function of our nature, as well as *the* end and object of our existence. All our pleasures are experienced by its instrumentality, and are connected with its normal, healthy action; while every pain we experience or are capable of experiencing in this world, is the legitimate product of its abnormal, unhealthy action. Nor is it *possible* for these organs to be unhealthy, or morbidly active, or inflamed, or in any way to depart from their healthy action, without causing pain, and in just that proportion in which they depart therefrom. Those in whom this department of their organization either greatly predominates, or becomes diseased or inflamed, will generally have cold

hands and feet, but much heat and pain in the *head*, if not a severe and continual head-ache, because too much blood flows to the head, and too little to the extremities. This causes them to feel nervous and irritable, and to become excited inordinately, even by trifles. Their heated imagination magnifies a mole-hill till it becomes a mountain. They are kept in a continual fever of excitement; tossed back and forward by currents and counter-currents of feelings which they find it impossible to control. Sometimes they are elated beyond measure, and filled with ecstasy; and anon they are plunged into the very depths of despair by some trifle, too insignificant to affect a healthy brain; for their sensibilities are *morbidly* alive to *every* thing. They retire to their couch, but not to sleep. The boiling blood courses through their brain, and their laboring pulsations shake their very frame. They think and feel intensely upon every thing, only to increase the disease, and aggravate their mental sufferings. If Cautiousness be large, they are afraid of their own shadow, and see all their paths filled with lions and tigers. If Approbativeness be large, they thirst for praise, but see the desired cup dashed from their lips by merely imaginary neglects, which are so construed that they cause the deepest chagrin and mortification. They seek sleep but find it not. Hour after hour, they turn from side to side upon their couches, exhausted even to prostration by mental action, yet unable to compose their excited, erratic feelings. Bright thoughts flit like meteors across their mental horizon only to vanish in midnight darkness. And if tardy sleep at last folds them in his unwilling arms, frightful dreams disturb their shallow slumbers, till they awake enshrouded in deep melancholy and impenetrable gloom. They feel most keenly only to feel most wretchedly. At short intervals, a sigh, or groan, or "Oh dear me!" escapes them, and they internally feel, "Oh wretched man that I am!" not because they feel guilty, but because they are *nervous*. They feel burdened with, they know not what, but this only aggravates their oppression. Things, otherwise their joy, become their tormentors, and every sweet is rendered bitter. Their nervous energies are wrought up to the highest pitch of inflamed action, and yet they have no strength to stand this preternatural excitement. Days and weeks roll on only to augment their miseries. The excited mind seeks relief in books, especially novels, which only increase their sufferings. The *cause* of these sufferings is a disordered *MENTAL temperament*, and *TIGHT-LACING* has a *direct* and necessary tendency to cause this predominance, first by retarding the action of the vital organs and hindering digestion, nutrition and circulation; and secondly, by inflaming the nervous system, and giving the blood a tendency to flow to the head, by preventing its flowing to the extremities of the skin. On inquiry into the private feelings of tight-lacers, into the secret recesses of their hearts, they will be found to feel as above described. If they have no *real* cause of trouble, they have some *imaginary* one, yet never once dreamed that this girding of their waists sends the blood up to their heads, and thus *morbidly* excites the brain, and at the same time cuts off those vital energies which alone can sustain it; thereby producing that disorder of the *mental* temperament which *causes* and *perpetuates* this awful state of feeling. And it is *right*; for tight-lacing is a *great sin*, and should be followed by *severe punishment*.

My conscience constrains me reluctantly to allude here to one other evil connected with tight-lacing. If I could omit it in justice to myself,

in justice to my work, in justice to tight-lacers, and in justice to those who may marry small waists, I would gladly do it. One thing is certain, I do not do it to gain popularity, for I know it will injure (at least for a few years) the popularity and sale of this work. I introduce it *because it ought to go in*—it *ought to be known* that it may be guarded against. Who does not know that the compression of any part produces *inflammation*? Who does not know that, *therefore*, tight-lacing around the waist keeps the blood *from* returning freely to the heart, and *retains* it in the bowels and neighboring organs, and thereby *inflames all the organs of the abdomen*, which thereby *EXCITES AMATIVE DESIRES?*) Away goes this book into the fire! “Shame! shame on the man who writes this!” exclaims Miss Fastidious Small-Waist. “The man who wrote that, ought to be tarred and feathered.” Granted; and then what shall be done to the *woman who laces tight?* If it be improper for a man to *allude* to this *effect* of lacing, what is it for a *woman to cause and experience* it? Let me tell you, Miss Fastidious, that the less you say about this, the better; because I have *TRUTH* on my side, and because it is high time that *men who wish virtuous wives knew it*, so that they may *avoid* those who have *inflamed* and exhausted this element of their nature. It is also high time that virtuous woman should *blush for very shame* to be seen laced tight, just as she *should* blush to be caught indulging impure desires.

(I know, indeed, that I have now appealed to the most powerful motive possible—to that of woman’s *modesty*; and therefore I make this appeal *because* it is thus powerful. I wish to make woman *ashamed* to lace tight, and *this will do it.* (No woman who reads this will dare be seen laced tight, because she *knows* it to be true, both from experience and from physiology.) My *object* in this allusion is, to break up this most pernicious fashion, and I think this one suggestion alone, if generally known, would do it. Many physiologists know this fact, but dare not *mention* it. The Lord forgive those *extra* modest authors who dare not speak the *TRUTH* for fear of offending fastidious ears, and losing reputation. Let it be remembered that a marked change is now coming over American ladies. They are known throughout Christendom for their false modesty; but the better classes are beginning to lay down their squeamishness. A few lessons in Physiology will break it down in all whose opinions are valuable—the rest will do well to remember that “*Evil is to him who evil THINKS*,”—but that “*To the pure, ALL things are pure.*” A few years will see whatever odium may be attached to this allusion, converted into commendation. At all events, I *dare* tell the truth, and am independent of consequences.

I will add, that this explains the fact that tight-lacers so easily *get in love.* The *fact* is indisputable, and the reason obvious. Tight-lacing disorders the nervous system, and this inflames the *base* of the brain, which necessarily excites the organ of Amativeness, situated at the lowest point in the base of the brain, and therefore the more readily affected by whatever disorders the body. In his work on Education, p. 94, and also in that on Temperance, p. 13, the author has *demonstrated* the principle, that *whatever* stimulates the body or irritates the nervous system, thereby *necessarily* excites the *base* of the brain in a pre-eminent degree. It is a settled principle of physiology, that *nothing* can stimulate or morbidly excite the body without setting on fire the animal propensities. Tight-lacing does certainly do this. And as Amativeness is

located at the lowest part of the base of the brain, tight-lacing, in rendering the brain and nervous system morbidly active, thereby necessarily kindles impure feelings. (This principle cannot be evaded. It is true in theory, it is true in fact, that tight-lacing kindles impure feelings, at the same time that it renders their possessor weak minded, so as to be the more easily led away by temptation. And *this, aye, this* is the reason why the bucks keep up this immodest fashion.)

I heartily pity a tight-laced woman ; for, I know what she feels, and what she endures. But she inflicts it *voluntarily*, just as the Hindoo widow burns herself to death on the funeral pile of her husband.

But another still greater evil inflicted by tight-lacing, is that which strikes a deadly blow at the *very life* of mankind. I refer to its influence on *posterity*. One end of woman's existence is offspring ; and who does not know that the constitution and health of the *child* depend upon those of the *mother* ; and especially, upon an *ample development of these vital organs*. The *nourishment* of the child, before and after birth, is a *leading* condition of a good mother in her capacity as mother. If she have too little vitality to sustain her own brain and muscles—a point already shown—how *can* she have a *surplus* for her infant ? To have as large a portion of her own feeble and vitiated vitality as is necessary to carry her child, withdrawn, makes her feel most awfully—*increasing* that class of feelings and cast of mind described on p. 10. Besides, tight-lacing allows so scanty a supply to the child, as often to prevent its entering the world alive, or else to hasten its time. But even if it do live to be born, and its mother live to bear it, it is so sickly, so feeble, that a trifling exposure nips the tender bud in its germ, or causes it to drag out the miserable existence of an invalid.

To every man who prefers burying his children to the trouble or expense of raising them, I say *marry a small waist*, and you will be sure to have few mature offspring, and those few thinned out by death. But I *warn* those who wish to see a healthy, happy family growing up around them, to render their life pleasing and nurse their declining years, as well as to perpetuate their name and race, and also those who do not wish to have their hearts rent asunder by the premature death of wife or children, to marry a woman having a large waist, full breast, and deep, broad chest. Such will live long ; but slim, small-waisted women must, in the very nature of things, bury their children and die young themselves. If this pernicious practice continue to rage through another generation with as much violence as it has for the last and present, it will kill all fashionable women and their children, and leave our square-formed, broad-shouldered, and full-breasted Irish and German women alone for wives and mothers. It has already alarmingly deteriorated our race in both physical and intellectual stature, and unless checked, *will soon DESTROY* it. Let this practice be continued, and *nothing* can save us as a nation : let it be abolished, and our nation will soon stand at the *head of the world* in every desirable quality.

No tongue can tell the number of mothers and children killed outright, or else made to drag out a short and miserable existence, by that accursed practice of tight-lacing. Most effectually does it cramp, and girt in, and deaden the vital apparatus, and thus stop the flow of vitality at its fountain-head, killing its thousands before they marry, and so effectually weakening others, as indirectly, though effectually, to cause the death of tens of thousands, aye, of millions more.) Yes, and that

even by *Christian* mothers—by the daughters of Zion, the followers of the Lamb! Yea, more. These infanticides, *with their corsets actually on*, are admitted into the sanctuary of the Most High God, and even to the communion-table of the saints! And poor, muffle-drummed ministers, either do not know that corseting does any damage, or, knowing it, do not open their mealy mouths, but administer the sacrament to infanticides, and to those who, while partaking of the emblems of their dying Savior, are “*in the very act*” of committing *infanticide*, and slow, but effectual *suicide*! Nor is there any sin in American Christian mothers committing these things, whereas *missionaries* must be sent to China and Bombay, to prevent *their* committing these very same crimes, though by a process as much less horrible, as to be killed outright by one fell blow, is less painful than to be *gradually* starved and strangled, till a lingering, and therefore a most horrid death, gives relief.

I appeal to every patriot, to every Christian, to every physiologist, to raise his voice with mine in the extirpation of this great sin of tight-lacing. Let the finger of scorn be pointed at every tight-laced woman, and let small waists be shunned, instead of courted, as wives and mothers. The practice is disgraceful, is immoral, is *murderous*; for, it is gradual *suicide*, and almost certain *infanticide*. It is *worse* than infanticide; for, to entail a diseased body and mind upon offspring, *in addition* to causing their premature death, is a crime of the *deepest dye man can commit*.

Wherein consists the difference between sowing the seeds of disease that necessarily hasten death, and killing the child outright? The *END* attained is the same—the *means* of the former is as much more horrible than those of the latter, as a *lingering* death is more horrid than a sudden one. Whence that mortality of children which consigns more than one half of all that are born in our cities to an early grave? Is it *natural*?—a part of the *necessary* operations of nature? No! it is *violated* nature; and I fearlessly avow, and appeal to the decision of any man of science acquainted with the subject, whether this is not the most effectual cause of infantile death, or, what amounts to the same thing, the means of that most revolting of all crimes—*infanticide*? Remember, ye young ladies who, in dressing yourselves off for the ball, or fashionable party, or promenade, I beseech you remember, that you are not only sowing the seeds of disease and premature death, which will nip all your pleasures in the bud, but which must also yield you a harvest of sorrows too many to number and too aggravated to endure—that you are bringing down not only your *own* soul with sorrow to an untimely grave, but, in case you become mothers, your *children* also with you or before you into their graves. If you wish to exclaim under a burden of nervousness and mental distress which you cannot support, “O wretched life that I live!”—if you wish to break the heart of your husbands and friends by your premature death, and have your own souls pierced through with indescribable anguish by the death of your children; if you wish to die while you live, and to die finally before your time; if you wish every sensible man that sees you to think, “how foolish, how wicked, that woman;” if you would exchange the rosy cheek of health for the portion of laced and sickly beauty; and the plump, round, full chest and form of unlaced health, for the poor, scrawny, haggard, sunken, and almost ghastly look of all who lace—then buy corset after corset, and lace tighter and tighter, and still tighter, and keep laced night and day till

them, or by even encouraging it. If you catch them fastening their clothes tight, tear them open, and explain to them the evils of compressing the organs of animal life.

5. To you, FATHERS, I make an appeal. If your wives are so destitute of physiological knowledge, and so full of fashionable foolery, and, withal, so anxious to *marry off* your daughters, as to make them follow this pernicious fashion in order to make a match, do *you* interpose a father's counsel; (and, if your daughters have been duly trained, your *advice alone* will be sufficient;) and, caution them not to marry any one who likes them a whit the better for tight-lacing; for, such a husband will never support them or make them happy.

Lastly, but most *emphatically*, I call upon you, YE DAUGHTERS OF ZION, ye lovers of the Lord! ye professed followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, I call upon you, totally to abstain from this practice and frown upon all who follow it. (If there be one self-contradiction or anomaly greater than another, it is a Miss RELIGIOUS SMALL-WAIST.) I do not certainly know but there *might* possibly be such a thing as a Christian drunkard, or a religious rascal, or a praying cheat and liar; but I really do not see how it is *possible* for tight-lacers ever to enter the kingdom of heaven. If so, it *must* be "*so as by fire*." (To lace tight is to commit suicide and infanticide, as already shown; and can *suicides* and *infanticides* be *Christians*?) If so, let me *not* be one. (Such love the young bucks and foppish beaux far better than their "*Lord and Master*." Quite too many of our female *professors* of religion, evidently go to church more to show their *small waists* than to worship. How *can* ye profane the sanctuary with your corsets, your cotton paddings, and your bustles? How *can* ye sing the praises of your God, or bow "*before Jehovah's awful throne*," in devout adoration or praise, with the circulation retarded, and your minds enfeebled and distracted by the uncomfortable or painful *stays*? It always shocks me—it reverses my veneration—it strikes me as a great profanation of God and things sacred, to see a tight-laced lady enter or leave the sanctuary with her gilt-edged prayer book or Bible. I should as soon think of joining a company of tavern-loungers as a church that allowed tight-lacing; for, the latter is as bad and its evils are as great, in my estimation, as those of drunkenness.

Once more, ye daughters of Zion—once again I call upon you to remember your standing and influence. Occupying as you do the very *pinnacle* of influence, your example does more to break or to perpetuate this practice, than almost any other influence that can be brought to bear upon it. Yet, *which way* does that all-powerful influence bear? It bears as strongly in favor of tight-lacing as your corset-strings do upon your waists! Do you really suppose your Savior thinks any the more of you for being *corseted*? Then why do it, especially when you go to sing his praises and to engage in his worship? What *possible* motive, drawn from religion, can a *pious* woman have for tight-lacing? No more than she can have for taking arsenic! Tight-lacing is incompatible with Christianity, or else I do not understand either its precepts or its principles. Will you, pious lacers, have the goodness to explain this passage? "*Unless ye forsake ALL, and follow me, ye CANNOT be my disciples*," or else lace no more forever!

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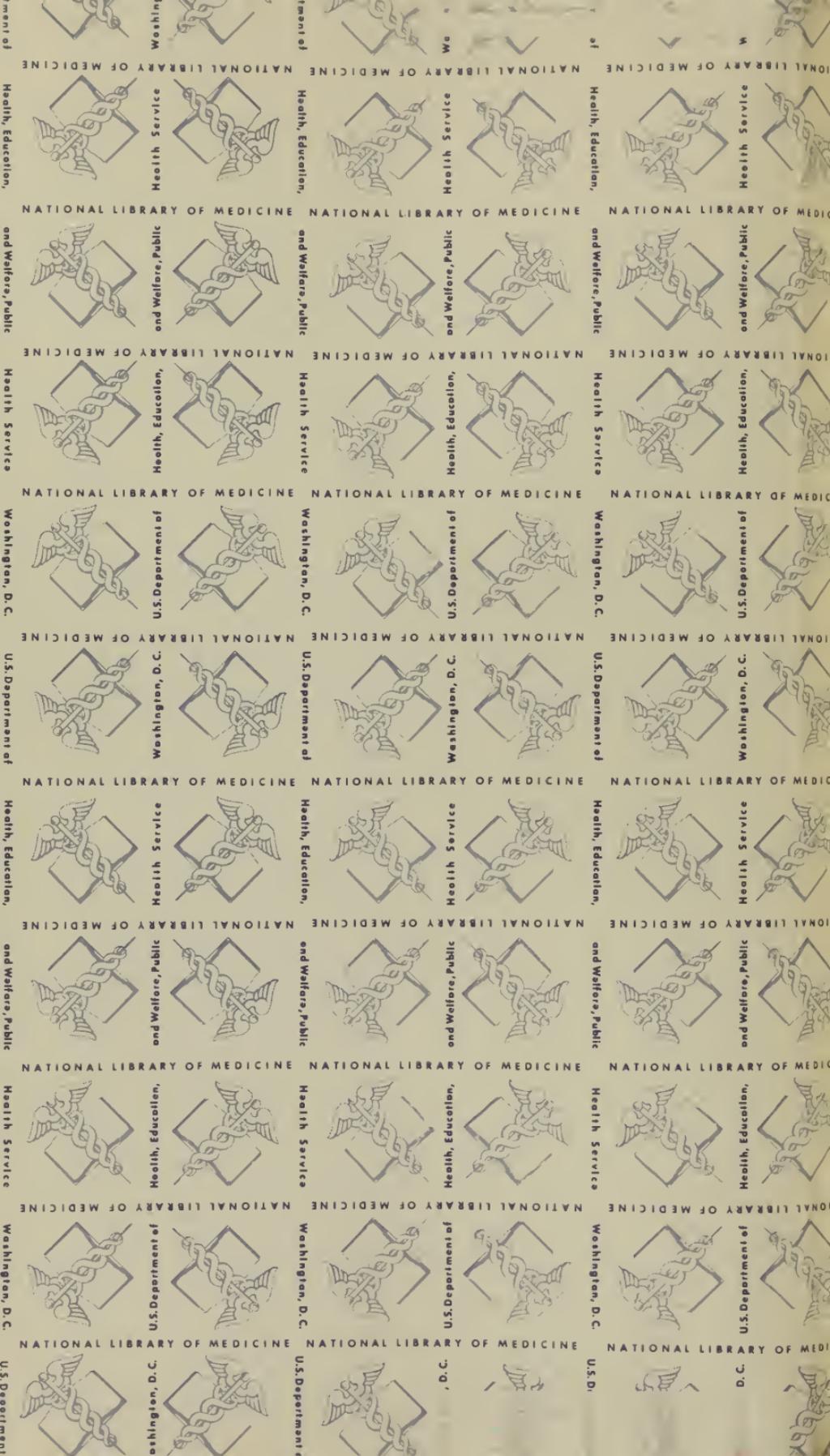
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